

Responder Knowledge Base Program (RKB)

Preparedness Directorate
Office of Grants and Training
Tracy A. Henke, Assistant Secretary



Background

The Responder Knowledge Base (RKB) is a web-based information service for the emergency responder community funded by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and hosted by the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (MIPT). RKB operates as a public service, with no cost to users and no cost to information contributors such as product manufacturers. Thousands of jurisdictions and departments, as well as virtually all State Administrative Agencies, now use the RKB on a regular basis to obtain grant guidance and unbiased product information. The site address is www.rkb.mipt.org.

RKB Mission

"Created to provide Emergency Responders, purchasers, and planners with a trusted, integrated, on-line source of information on products, standards, certifications, grants, and other equipment-related information."

The Responder Knowledge Base has become a "first-stop" for Emergency Responders, purchasers, and planners seeking equipment information. RKB provides a wide variety of in-depth product information while maintaining a reputation for objectivity. The knowledge base vets and integrates input from a variety of sources, including manufacturers, standards development organizations, testers, and other web sites. The RKB mission has been endorsed by many of the leading associations in the emergency response community, including:

- InterAgency Board for Equipment Standardization and Interoperability
- International Association of Chiefs of Police
- National Sheriffs Association
- International Association of Fire Chiefs
- International Association of Fire Fighters
- National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians
- National Bomb Squad Commanders Advisory Board
- International Safety Equipment Association

Knowledge Base Content

The "heart" of the RKB is its ability to link varying types of equipment-related information so that even inexperienced users can quickly find a wealth of relevant information. Product descriptions, standards, third-party certifications, operational suitability tests, and grants/assistance programs are only a few of the many categories of information in the RKB. When an item is displayed, a set of "knowledge links" appears to guide users to related items in other categories. A built-in site tutorial helps users to quickly realize the site's full potential.

Major Programs Supported

The RKB is the official site for the DHS's Office of Grants and Training (G&T) **Authorized Equipment List (AEL)**, which is provided in an interactive format and linked to relevant information such as applicable standards. The following grant programs are served by the RKB's interactive AEL: State Homeland Security Program, Urban Area Security Initiative, Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, Metropolitan Medical Response System, Emergency Management Performance Grant, Citizen Corps Program, Transit Security Grant Program, Port Security Grant Program, Intercity Bus Security Grant Program, Buffer Zone Protection Program, and Chemical Buffer Zone Protection Program. The RKB also provides the official online version of the InterAgency Board's **Standardized Equipment List (SEL)**. The RKB is the only site in existence that provides a cross-reference between the AEL and SEL.

Under G&T direction, the RKB also supports other DHS programs, including:

- **Commercial Equipment Direct Assistance Program (CEDAP)**. RKB handles the entire on-line application process including email notifications and telephone support for applicants, and then transmits the data for scoring and award.
- **Systems Assessment and Validation for Emergency Responders (SAVER) Program**. All user registration and account maintenance services for SAVER, including verification privileges for emergency responders, are provided by RKB. SAVER content is also integrated into the knowledge base, and users can navigate seamlessly between the RKB and SAVER sites.
- **Homeland Defense Equipment Reuse (HDER) Program**. Product information on available products and information on how to request them is provided on-line.
- **Homeland Security Standards Database (HSSD)**. Information on more than 6,000 standards is integrated into the RKB and cross-referenced with the HSSD.
- **Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS) System**. Information on LLIS documents is integrated into the RKB and linked to related products and standards.

The RKB Today

The RKB has more than **34,700 registered users**, including Federal, state, and local responders from every discipline, and more than **800 contributing organizations**, including product manufacturers, standards organizations, and certifying agencies. The site currently contains nearly 4,000 products, as well as thousands of related items such as certifications and standards. In addition, the site has added special features such as mission critical hints and the ability to display "side by side" comparisons of products. RKB also offers an "Ask an Expert" feature; more than 1,400 replies have been provided to date, ranging from equipment issues and standards to grant eligibility. In 2006, the site has averaged more than 24,000 visits per month with an average time on site of more than nine minutes.

For Additional Information

Questions about the Responder Knowledge Base Program should be directed to the RKB Program Office at 703-641-2078.